

NEWS RELEASE



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San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - September 12, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Marisela Castro-Juarez was sentenced today in federal court in San Diego based upon her convictions on two counts of bringing undocumented aliens to the United States for financial gain, in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii), and one count of engaging in financial transactions of over \$10,000 with money derived from alien smuggling proceeds, in violation of Title 18 United States Code, Section 1957. United States District Court Judge Janis L. Sammartino sentenced Castro-Juarez to serve 63 months in custody, three years of supervised release and a \$300 special assessment. The Court also entered a preliminary order of forfeiture for a house in Chula Vista and \$598,775. Castro-Juarez pled guilty on May 15, 2008.

In imposing the sentence, Judge Sammartino found that Castro-Juarez was the leader of a long-term alien smuggling organization that operated from 2001 until her arrest in 2008 and was responsible for the smuggling and transportation of over 100 undocumented aliens. According to court records, between 2001

and 2006, Castro-Juarez made deposits of over \$590,000 from her smuggling proceeds into her personal bank account and used the profits to purchase a house in Chula Vista.

The charges stem from an investigation entitled “Operation Blackjack” by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection targeting a long-term alien smuggling organization.

DEFENDANT

Case No. 08cr0682-JLS

Marisela Castro-Juarez

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)- Bringing Aliens to the United States for Financial Gain
Penalties: Mandatory minimum 3 years in prison, maximum 10 years in prison, \$250,000 fine.

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1957- Engaging in financial transaction of over \$10,000 with proceeds of specified unlawful activity.

Maximum Penalties: 10 years in prison, \$250,000 fine.

Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)- Forfeiture

AGENCIES

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Customs and Border Protection